Issaquah School District, High School #4, Elementary School #17, Community Conference Submittal:

Project Narrative:

Site Overview: Issaquah School District, High School No. 4 and Elementary School No. 17 sit on 40.79 acres of the former Providence Heights College. The site perimeter is heavily wooded with a large clearing in the middle. This property fronts 228th Ave SE and borders Issaquah and Sammamish. In January 2020, the site was rezoned to Community Facilities – Facility (CF-F), which is compatible with public school zoning. The neighboring Providence Point retirement community borders the property to north, west and south and is a mix of single family residences, apartments and condominiums with several larger scale community facilities such as a Clubhouse, Indoor Pool, Café, Apartment building, Fitness Center and tennis courts. Beyond Providence Point, lies single-family residential developments with retail and Pine Lake Middle School to the north.

Main access to the schools, off 228th, is from a new entry boulevard that meanders through the trees, climbs up roughly 100' of elevation, with terraced retaining walls on either side, and arrives at the top of the campus at an intersection with baseball and softball fields to the right, a drive to the left to the High School for parent drop-off, student and staff parking, or straight to the Elementary School. School buses continue straight (west) to serve the Elementary School and south student entry of the High School. This main boulevard is defined by plantings (both of seasonal interest and buffer character), pedestrian sidewalks, pedestrian scale site lighting and vistas to the schools.

Site access was carefully considered to provide a safe distance from adjacent intersections, preserve existing trees and minimize site grading. Site improvements along 228th are anticipated including a traffic signal at the entry drive. The design team is currently working on a traffic study and entry access to support the mitigation needed for the additional school traffic. Current traffic studies supports a single entry access for students, staff, parent drop-off and buses while maintaining the existing southern entry for emergency vehicle access only. Preliminary traffic analysis also supports projected required parking counts for the Elementary School, High School and Stadium.

Site Design Overview: The site design takes its cues from the early site development and site character. In 1936 the site was heavily forested with a patchwork of clearings. In 1959, when the site was developed for Providence Heights College, a larger central clearing was introduced with a forested perimeter. Today's proposal maintains the idea of a forested perimeter with a mix of older and new growth plantings throughout the campus, and expands on the central clearing to include space for the schools and athletic fields - see Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Taking inspiration from the existing woodland vegetation and rugged topography on site, the design team proposes introducing flexible outdoor gathering spaces defined by elements that are consistent with regional examples in the Issaquah Alps, such as, trailheads, rocky outcrops, forest clearings and woodland meadows. The gathering spaces are planned to include natural elements (boulders and

stumperies) and constructed features (concrete seat walls and decorative paving) with a planting palette of native plants and grasses - see Figures 5, 6, 7.

Retaining as many existing trees as possible is a priority with several large expanses saved along 228th. In areas where grading is proposed to accommodate program elements and tree retention is not possible, reforestation planting is proposed to the extent feasible. Retaining walls are softened with climbing vines, large shrubs, and trees where appropriate, and large planted berms are provided to buffer neighboring properties in strategic locations.

The site will also include surface and structured parking areas, track and field for co-ed sports and physical education classes with a covered grandstand, softball and baseball fields, tennis courts, and an Elementary School covered play structure. Pedestrian connections throughout the site is an important element that ties the campus together.

Building Overview: Building siting takes advantage of the large clearing at the top of the campus, preserves as many trees and natural features as possible around the site perimeter and provides ample vehicular queueing to both schools.

The approximately 226,500 sf High School is designed to serve 1,400 students in grades 9-12. The approximately 71,300 sf elementary school will serve 600 students in grades K-5. The high school includes general use classrooms, library, commons, food services, performing arts center, gymnasium with auxiliary gyms, locker rooms with fitness and activity rooms, career technical education rooms, and supporting administrative spaces. The elementary school includes general use classrooms, cafeteria, gymnasium, library, music and supporting administrative spaces. In subsequent phases of work, portables are anticipated to be added to both schools and an addition added to the High School.

Architecturally, both schools are three story in height to minimize their footprint and site impacts. Distinct programmatic features, such as linear classroom wings, large glassy commons, gymnasiums and libraries allow the building massing to be varied which also creates intimate outdoor play and gathering spaces. Similar in design vernacular, both schools provide covered entrances into lofty glass lobbies. Classroom wings span east to west to take advantage of daylighting and offer operable windows. Connections to the outdoors is important and purposeful providing direct access to playgrounds, exterior educational spaces and athletic plazas. While sustainability helps inform many of our design decisions, these buildings are not seeking green building certification.

Design Challenges: The site lies outside of the Central Issaquah Neighborhoods, however, many of the guidelines outlined in the Central Issaquah Plan have influenced our site planning and building decisions. Following the definition of Compact Schools, we have created a pedestrian friendly campus that preserves many of the natural areas and trees, offers plazas for outdoor play and study, and maintains a pedestrian-friendly scale around the buildings. Structured parking provides stalls for 50% of the required spaces.

Parking: Parking requirements, per Code, for the Elementary School indicates a need for (96) stalls for everyday school use and (117) stalls for special events in the Cafeteria and Gym. Current plan shows providing (105) parking stalls with an additional (17) parallel parking stalls totaling (122) stalls. For the High School, Code requires (421) stalls for everyday school use or (583) stalls when including a special event in the Performing Arts Center. Current plan shows providing (524) stalls in the north surface lot and parking structure below, with an additional (70) spaces south of the High School for a total of (594)

spaces. The stadium seats 2,000 and requires (667) spaces, per Code. Shared Elementary School (105 stalls) and High School parking stalls (524 + 38 event overflow stalls at the HS Bus Depot) accommodates this need with a total of (667) stalls, leaving room for school buses at the Elementary School and High School. The School District does not intend to host events at the Elementary School, High School and Stadium at the same time.

Floor Area Ratio: Recently adopted amendments to the City of Issaquah, Land Use Code, for Compact Schools offers interesting site planning challenges to meet the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) requirement. A .75 FAR is required yet difficult to achieve when providing athletic fields, preserving trees, providing parking, roads and open space. An Administrative Adjustment of Standards (AAS) may be negotiated when an applicant can meet a .375 FAR (a 50% reduction of the .75 FAR). The design team has looked at various ways to meet this .375 FAR threshold.

Current Configuration: yields .356 FAR and includes the maximum projected build out with a 71,300 sf Elementary School, 226,500 sf High School plus a 13,500 sf High School addition and a total of (8) portables. Covered structures are included in the Building Area, such as the Elementary School covered play structure and pedestrian covered areas. Grandstands and parking structure are not included. Athletic fields, wetlands, buffers, setbacks and utility easements reduce the overall site area. To meet a .75 FAR, an additional 392,781 sf of building area would need to be added to the High School and/or Elementary. To meet a .375 FAR (for an AAS), an additional 31,829 sf of building area would need to be added. This additional building area would exceed the School District's programmatic needs and budget.

We considered different ways to meet the FAR requirements, even discussing whether the School Bus Depot should be considered 'Academic Support' space since it provides transportation for all students. This proposition was not deemed viable. The team would like to pursue exceeding a .375 FAR by designating the heavily wooded area of trees along 228th as an Outdoor Forestry and Conservation Educational program. This heavily wooded area could provide an opportunity for students to learn about trees and understory while maintaining trails and removing invasive species. Cross country practice could also take advantage of this trail system. The School District is considering ways to implement an academic curriculum program for this area. The existing 104,000 sf of existing tree save area yields a FAR of .399. Further discussion with the City of Issaquah and the community would be beneficial to review this proposal.

The Issaquah School District and design team are looking forward to opening this conversation up with the community. We would especially like feedback on the overall site design including the following:

- Revegetation strategy
- Treatment at site retaining walls
- Hardscape areas around the campus
- Planted berms and plant materials around the site perimeter
- Opportunities to meet the FAR requirements without increasing building area including the proposal to provide educational trails within the existing forested growth along 228th Ave SE

FIGURE 1

1936 DEVELOPMENT

GRAPHIC SCALE

0 15 30 60

1" = 30 FEET

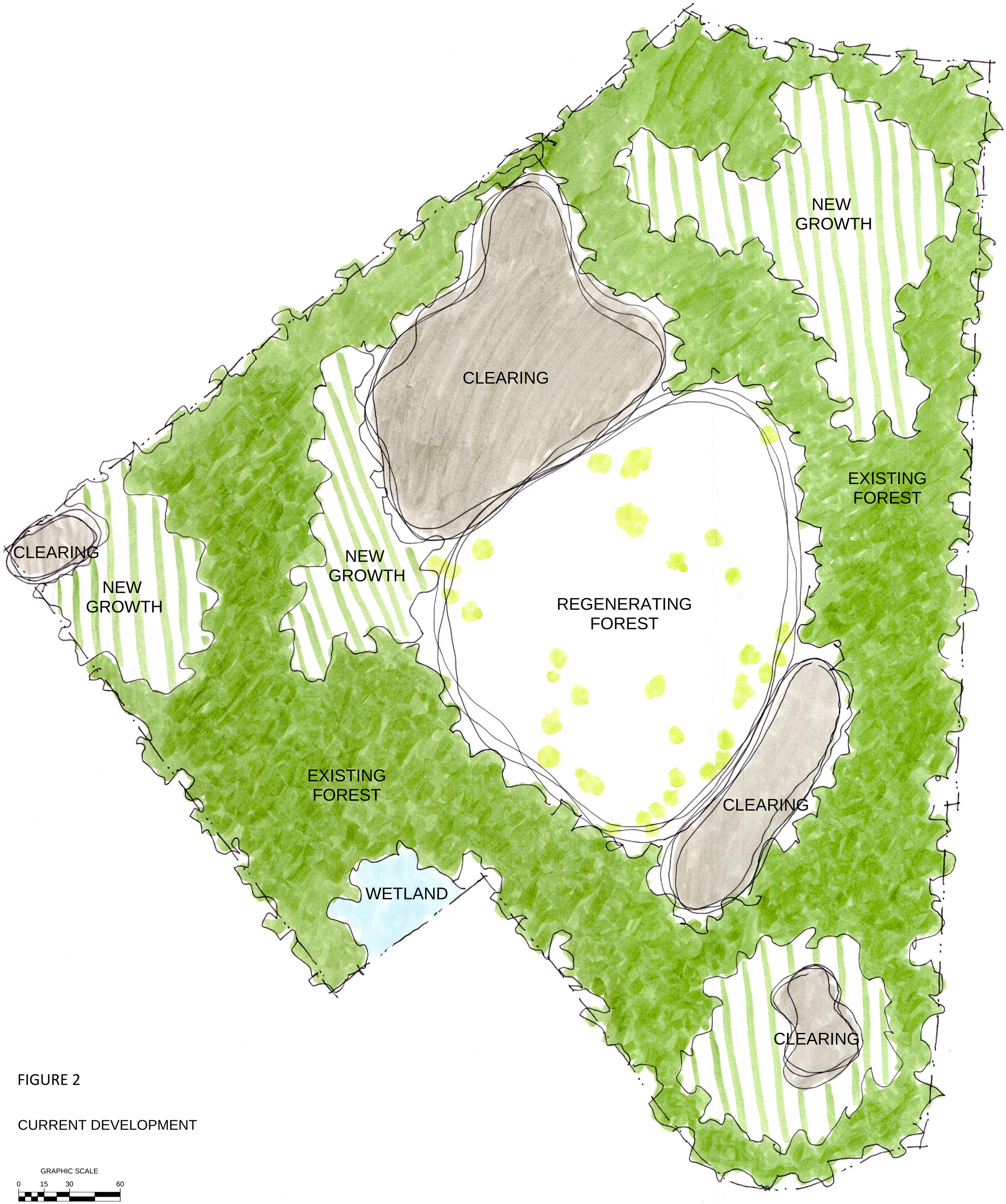


FIGURE 2

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

GRAPHIC SCALE

0 15 30 60

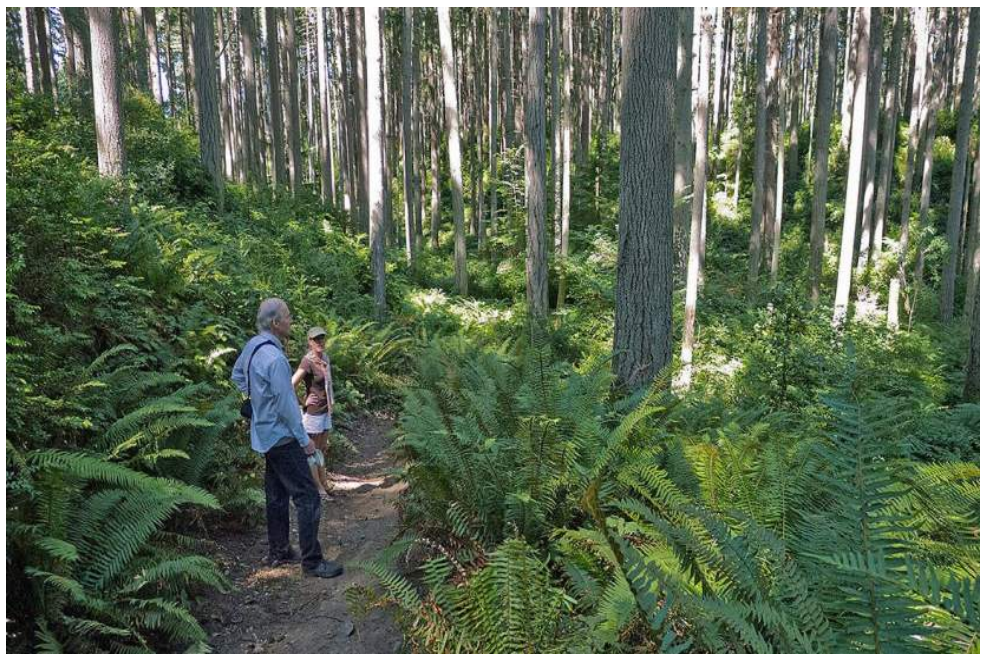
1" = 30 FEET

FIGURE 3

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

PACIFIC NORTHWEST
FOREST TYPOLOGIES

EXISTING FOREST



NEW GROWTH

CLEARING

REGENERATING FOREST

FIGURE 4

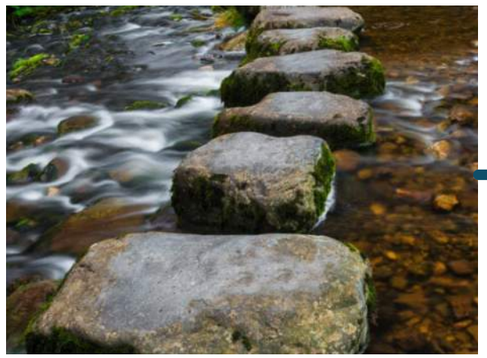
WATER

FOREST

SITE

SOUND OF WATER

CROSSINGS



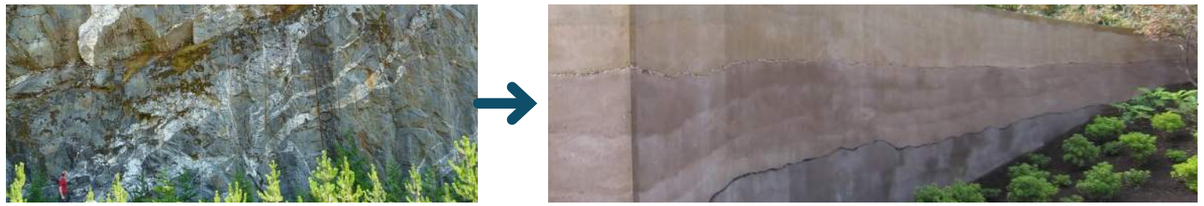
WETLANDS

FIGURE 5

EARTH

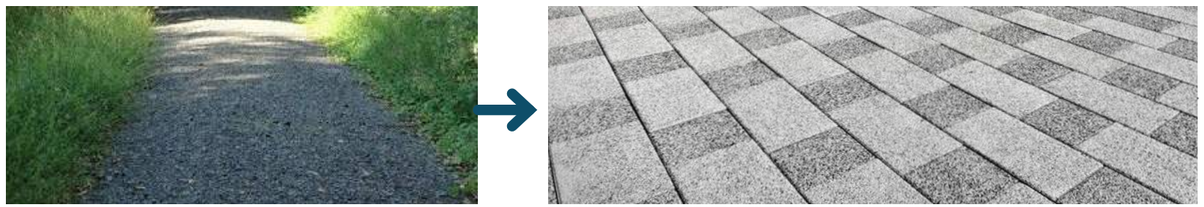
FOREST **SITE**

GEOLOGY



BOULDERS

SURFACE



DAPPLED

COBBLE

FIGURE 6

LIFE

FOREST

SITE

SILHOUETTE

GROUND PLANE

UNDERSTORY

FALLEN TREES

INSECT LIFE

FIGURE 7